AMENDED CLAIMS

1. **(Currently Amended)** A portable device for supporting a load in a cantilevered disposition ~~relative to~~ **extending from** a generally horizontal extant structure, said extant horizontal structure having an edge, a top surface, and a bottom surface, **said device** comprising:

a platform portion **extending in a first direction, said platform portion for holding said load in a cantilevered disposition**;

a bracing portion **extending in a second direction generally opposite said first direction, said bracing portion having a first bearing segment at its distal end** for transferring **an upward vertical component of** the moment ~~reaction~~ **couple,** caused by **supporting** said ~~cantilevered~~ load **in a cantilevered disposition,** to ~~a segment of~~ said bottom surface at a location **remote** ~~removed~~ from said edge ~~in a direction generally opposite from said platform portion~~; and

at least one hanging bracket **pivotably attached at a first axis interjacent said platform portion and said bracing portion,**

said hanging bracket having a second bearing segment at its distal end for transferring a downward vertical component of said moment couple to said ~~connecting said device to said~~ top surface of said extant structure **at a location** adjacent to said edge**,**

said hanging bracket pivoting into a generally compact disposition relative to said platform and bracing portions when said device is not in use;

wherein **mounting said second bearing segment of said hanging bracket on said top surface adjacent to said edge and applying said load to said platform portion causes said first bearing segment of said bracing portion to engage with said bottom surface at said location remote from said edge, thereby supporting said load in said cantilevered disposition extending from said extant structure and accommodating a diversity of variable thicknesses between said top surface and said bottom surface of diverse ones of said extant structure.** ~~said hanging bracket is pivotably attached to said platform portion and to said bracing portion at a generally horizontal first axis.~~

2. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said platform portion **and said bracing portion are integral portions of a singular structure.** ~~extends in a generally horizontal disposition relative to said extant structure.~~

3. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said platform portion **and said bracing portion are integral portions of a singular structure, and said hanging bracket is configured so as to pivot to a generally obtuse angular position relative to said platform portion;**
so that, when said device is mounted on said extant structure, said platform portion extends in a generally sloped disposition ~~relative to said extant structure~~ **from said structure;**
thereby providing an easel-like platform portion.

4. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said platform portion, said bracing portion, and said bracket are pivotably attached at a common said first axis, and said device includes **means for stopping the rotation of said bracing portion at a predetermined angular disposition relative to said platform portion** ~~a stopping mechanism for maintaining said platform portion and said bracing portion in relative angular disposition;~~
thereby, in a first configuration for mounting on said structure, providing a generally horizontal platform portion, and in a second configuration with said bracing portion and said bracket pivoted toward said platform portion providing a generally compact configuration when said device is not in use.

5. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 1, ~~wherein~~ **having** said bracing portion ~~is~~ pivotably attached to said platform portion at said first axis ~~and~~ **wherein** said bracket is pivotably attached to said bracing portion at a second axis parallel to and remote from said first axis and further wherein said device

includes **means for** ~~a~~ stopping ~~mechanism for~~ **rotation and** maintaining said bracing portion and said platform portion in relative angular disposition.

6. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said bracing portion also includes ~~a mechanism~~ **adjustment means** for adjusting the relative **slope** ~~angle~~ of said platform **portion** relative to said extant structure and for accommodating ~~diverse~~ **variable** thicknesses **between said top surface and said bottom surface of diverse ones** of said extant horizontal structure.

7. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said bracing portion includes said **adjustment means** ~~mechanism~~ for adjusting said relative **slope** ~~angle~~ of said platform ~~relative to said extant structure which said mechanism~~ **wherein said means** is hingedly attached to said platform portion ~~and includes means for temporarily fixing said relative angle~~.

8. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said **adjustment means** ~~mechanism for adjusting~~ includes a ~~series~~ **plurality** of alternative ~~first~~ axes for attaching said bracing portion.

9. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said **adjustment means** ~~mechanism for adjusting~~ includes a series of alternative pivot axes for attaching said hanging bracket **to said bracing poriton**.

10. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said ~~mechanism for adjusting~~ **adjustment means** includes at least one threaded stud ~~having a~~ **having said first** bearing segment at its distal end.

11. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said device includes ~~a mechanism~~ **means** for temporally latching said platform portion to said bracing portion in a predetermined angular relationship.

12. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said platform portion includes at least one lateral restraining member **comprising a structure projecting in a generally perpendicular direction from at least the distal end of said platform portion** .

13. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said device also includes ~~at least one~~ **a plurality of** flexible linear elements attached to said device at only one end **of said linear elements,** for the purpose of ~~separating~~ **referencing** pages of a document loaded on said device.

14. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said platform portion ~~is attachable to~~ **includes means for removably attaching** said load.

15. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said platform portion is an integral component of said load**, thereby providing a singular compactly folding entity with integral means for temporary attachment to said extant horizontal structure in said cantilevered disposition**.

16. **(Currently Amended)** A method of supporting a load in a cantilevered disposition from an extant horizontal structure comprising:

a. providing **said extant horizontal structure with an edge, a top surface, and a bottom surface wherein the thickness as measured between said top surface and said bottom surface varies between diverse ones of said structure** ~~a device which includes at least a platform portion, a bracing portion, and a pivotably attached hanging bracket connected at a first axis~~;

b. providing **an interconnected platform portion, bracing portion, and hanging bracket with bearing segment at its distal end, said hanging bracket pivotably attached at a first axis interjacent**

said platform portion and said bracing portion, said hanging bracket pivoted into a generally compact relationship with said platform portion and said bracing portion ~~an extant horizontal structure having an edge, a top surface, and a bottom surface~~;

c. **pivoting** ~~extending a~~ **said** distal end of said hanging bracket away from said platform portion and said bracing portion;

d. hanging said **bearing segment of said** distal end of said hanging bracket from said top surface **at a first location** adjacent to said edge of said extant structure; ~~and~~

e. ~~engaging~~ **pivoting** said bracing portion **to engage** with said bottom surface of said extant horizontal structure at **a second location** ~~an area~~ remote from said edge**; and**

f. **applying said load to said platform portion** so as to cause a moment couple resultant from said load **in said cantilevered disposition** ~~applied to said platform portion~~ to react against said extant structure in a downward direction at said **first location** ~~top surface adjacent to said edge~~ and in an upward direction at said **second location;**

thereby supporting said load in said cantilevered disposition from said extant horizontal structure and accommodating said thickness which varies between diverse ones of said structure. ~~bottom surface at said area remote from said edge.~~

17. **(Currently Amended)** A device for supporting a load in an cantilevered position ~~relative to~~ **extending from** an extant horizontal shelf which **comprises** ~~includes~~:

a structure for ~~supporting~~ **receiving** said load in **said** ~~a~~ cantilevered disposition, ~~relative to said shelf which~~ said structure **including** ~~comprises~~ at least a

platform portion **extending in a first direction,** ~~at a first end and~~ a

bracing portion **extending in a second direction generally opposite said**

first direction, ~~at a second end, said portions being divided by a generally horizontal axis;~~ and

an axis interjacent said platform and said bracing portions;

and at least one hanging bracket pivotably attached to said structure at said axis and having a ~~generally horizontal~~ bearing segment at its distal end;

so that, when said bearing segment is placed on a top surface of said shelf adjacent to **an** ~~said~~ edge **of said shelf** and said bracing portion is engaged with a bottom surface of said shelf at a location remote from said edge, said load **applied to said platform portion** is supported in said cantilevered position **and, when said hanging bracket is removed and pivoted toward said structure, said device provides a relatively compact entity** .

18. **(Currently Amended)** A device in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said bracing portion is pivotably attached to said platform portion, and said structure includes ~~a mechanism~~ **means** for temporarily maintaining said bracing portion in a fixed **angular** position relative to said ~~pivotably attached~~ said platform portion.

19. **(Canceled)**

20. **(Canceled)**

21. **(New) A device in accordance with claim 17 having means for attaching said pivotably attached hanging bracket at said first axis, said means selected from the group consisting of: a slot through the surface of said structure for receiving the effectively bulbous end of a generally planar said hanging bracket; a slot in said structure containing at least one generally tubular bearing insert for receiving axial segments of said hanging bracket; axial receptors on the lateral edges of said structure for receiving said axial segments of said hanging bracket; and a hinge portion attached to said structure for receiving a corresponding hinge segment comprising said axial segments.**

22.(New) A device in accordance with claim 17 wherein said device, mounted on said shelf, supports reading and reference materials in a sloped easel-like disposition, said device also comprising means for containing said materials on said shelf, means for restraining the pages of said materials in an open position, and means for distinguishing one or more pages for reference.

END OF AMENDED CLAIMS